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Book Review

GENEVA ACCORD. By John Whitman. (Crown, \$14.95.) John Whitman spent 30 years in the Central Intelligence Agency, two of them in Geneva as a member of this country's SALT II negotiating team. Now he has written a book about his experiences — not a factual account, neither reportage nor memoir, but fiction. And a thriller at that. Its publisher is promoting the book as an armchair way to learn about arms control. But "Geneva Accord" is a novel for all that — the truth wrapped in fiction. Mr. Whitman's hero, a top C.I.A. expert on the Soviet Union before joining the SALT talks, is a widower and ski enthusiast named George Inigo. He is a deskman, not a spy. He is concerned with monitoring the treaty, not with recruiting cloak-and-dagger men. In fact, the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. are parties to an unwritten hands-off agreement — neither will tamper with the other's delegation. So when Victor Smirnov, the K.G.B. representative in Geneva, approaches Inigo and seeks political asylum in return for supplying Soviet "fallback" negotiating positions, a full-fledged hush-hush C.I.A. operation is shoved into motion. Inigo discovers his predecessor in Geneva was murdered, perhaps by C.I.A. counterintelligence agents, perhaps by the K.G.B., perhaps only by a jealous husband. Then it comes to light that the murdered man's East German mistress, a nuclear physicist and the daughter of a Nazi, is an East German spy. The complications threaten to swamp the arms negotiations altogether. But despite the predictable clichés and Mr. Whitman's drab, memolike prose style, "Geneva Accord" is not a superficial book. About halfway through, the author shifts his focus from the inner workings of the agency to his insights into character and psychology, and at that point the novel becomes gripping. It turns out not to be about arms control at all. In the end it is about commitment and trust — the bases of intelligence operations and of love.

— D. G. Myers

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